

ACHOO!

Service

NEWS FROM

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1

GESUNDHEIT!

WINTER 1997-1998

INSTITUTE

Dear Friends,

The sculptor, Henry Moore, at the age of 80 was asked what the secret of life is. He said, "The secret of life is to have a task, something you devote your entire life to, something you bring everything to, every minute of the day for the rest of your life. And the most important thing is, it must be something you cannot possibly do."

I have just returned from Macomb County, Michigan, where we have been asked to engage in just such an audacious project: to build a healthy county of 730,000 people. It is a dream come true to be able to take radical social ideas to middle America, helping ordinary citizens grow a community that nurtures them. This is their fourth year at work and our third visit. In three days we met special people really tackling a big dream. This is like ecovillage work, in the field. It is such a privilege to try to give big vision to help heal community in our society. Human design of social interaction is integral to community health. If you have any suggestions or references or projects, let us know about them, please.

At every engagement we are asked how people can be motivated to take part in creating a desirable society and/or self. This is truly the question of the modern era of social change: how does one motivate in a climate of powerlessness, cynicism and whining? I suspect there are millions of great workers for a better world. I'd like to salute the ones in Macomb: Lisa Marie, Jose, Pat, Gary, Scot, Kurt, Helen, Louetta, and all their cotravellers. They

_____ by Patch Adams
dream big. They give me hope.

HOLLYWOOD HOOPLA: THE MOVIE'S ON!

Life is surely surreal. For 26 years I have tried unsuccessfully in every possible arena to find funds to build a service-oriented hospital that satisfies both caregiver and patient in joyful healthcare. For years people have said that our silliness has been a deterrent to people taking that hospital seriously. Recent developments make me wonder if silliness, in the end, may build the hospital.

This summer, I spent some days in Robin Williams' house. He and Marsha felt like friends welcoming me into their life. He's going to play me in a feature movie Universal Studios is making of my early life. Robin is the actor I would have wanted. It was thrilling, fun, deep.

I met the director, Tom Shadyak, in May, at my house and felt connected

quickly. He is vivacious and asks deep questions. He, the producers (including Marsha Williams), Robin—all say they want the movie to be about joyful, relentless service in a humorous context. My boys and I hope we can be in it.

Robin and I clowning for several hours in U.C.S.F. Hospital with kids who were very sick. The guy with the fish had a good time. Tom filmed us there, and also brought writer Steve Oederkirk to my presentation for the



Robin Williams and Patch Adams, 1997: A Matched Pair?

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Lars Adams and friend, Nune: Giggfest! 1997



National Youth Leadership Forum. The filming begins in February and the movie, "Patch Adams," opens December, 1998.

Want to organize a Gesundheit movie/fundraiser in your town? Help the movie build our hospital!
Phone (703) 525-8169

I have wondered what the movie project's consequences will be to me and our work. I've discussed the subject over and over with many friends. Certainly, I try to focus on hoping it builds our hospital. It will expand our audience greatly which I hope means more social change. It will make me even less private than I have ever been. I don't know if I'll still be able to answer all my mail. I pray it doesn't hurt the friendly me. Such irony I feel, knowing that during our first 12 years I was rabid about no publicity. I feel this step is the scariest thing I've ever done. It is for want of a hospital that I plunge into the maelstrom with gusto.

Designing An Ecovillage/Hospital

We had a big pow wow in August about what will be our final design of the whole project so maybe next year we can begin building. So many good things are happening that we want to be ready. We're thinking phase one would include the kitchen/dining area; bedrooms for at least 20 people; and the outpatient clinic area of the hospital. This way we could begin some outpatient care while the rest is being built.

One of the most exciting things that has happened in the last 19 months ACHOO! Service 2

is that Gesundheit is now committed to creating what some in the environmental movement are calling an ecovillage. Robert Gilman defines an ecovillage as "a human scale full-featured settlement in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that is supportive of healthy human development and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future."

Kathy Blomquist has really put this issue forward and we embrace the idea of consciously trying to design our spaces as a celebration of community in relationship to nature. I am glad to make this exploration a part of our healing journey and part of what we can teach others who come. Send Kathy your thoughts or papers or books.

The German Connection

So humor is making my life. For a while I have been having wacky letters with a German, Michael Berger. He's been involved in the Fluxist art movement most of its existence—art and humor for social change. He has a novelty business in Germany and has set up a humor museum near Wiesbaden. I spent some wonderful silly time with him and clown friends while touring Germany in May. I cherish his playfulness. Michael is helping us move forward with the architectural design work in a significant way.

My book came out in German in May thanks to a beloved kind friend Walther Lechler—a physician who for about the same length of time has created his own healing environment. I call him Papa and we love each other. In parallel universes we have come to the same conclusions. He found a publisher and set up a two week tour there that was heaven. With translating sidekick David, we invaded Germany with underwear on our heads. He inspired great silliness wearing my clown costume at his annual Pentecostal conference in Bad Herrenalb. The magic of friendship and love was so strong with me and Walther, David, Beate, Lavendal and Giesela. This trip

included meeting Mad Michael (mentioned earlier) and the Wiesbaden Clinicclowns. Old friend, Sabrina, took me to an impressive ten year old commune in Niederkaufungen.

New Book In The Works

There's more. This February (oh, this is bliss) my favorite makes-me-laugh cartoonist, Jerry van Amerongen ("The Neighborhood," "Ballard Street"), agreed to co-author my next book. It will be named "House Calls," a fun tool for people visiting friends in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, indeed the world. The point is to bless every visit with the spirit of the house call. Maybe even your public persona will treat each citizen that way.

Mother Russia

And Russia. Bless Mother Russia for what she gives me. Our annual clown trips have led to our first foolish foray into Bosnia in November. Last year Kathy Blomquist came along and (presto!) was so good Lori asked her to join the tour staff. So she goes again this year. Now so many folks want to go that Beach Clown and Kathy will lead a trip in March. I had a new costume this year that made laughter so loud it hurt. And Heidi made me a magical aromatherapy pouch to do shamanistic clowning for relief of suffering relief.

Good news on the orphanage. After three years and a million miles of red tape, Maria Illesheva and Illya have obtained permission to open the first

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private Russian orphanage and arts center. If you want to help, contact me. Are there any out there who would go there for 2-4 weeks to paint, fix up, make furniture? This will save lives. The orphans' glorious murals are now on display in a major Moscow exhibition hall. If you'd like them in your life—they're available on color cards. Call (206) 762-5257 for information.

On The Road

In each of the summers since the last newsletter, my son Lars and I have gone to Wavy Gravy's clown camp—Camp Winnarainbow in northern California; this year for 2 weeks. I teach clown philosophy and slack rope walking. Lars likes the diabolo and devil sticks. It is a super camp teaching social change in a circus context. Kathy got a chance to nurse there last year for 2 weeks. And we've drafted the nurse we met there to work with us: Janet-From-Another-Planet. She joins us in Russia this year. Serendipity put Robin Williams and me (while in UCSF Med.) clowning in the room of Jasper, beloved fool of Camp Winnarainbow, who's lickin' leukemia. Send your licks and love his way.

I've been to West Virginia both summers for short visits and am forever amazed at Kathy's magic. Things look great. There is a lot of exploring what community means. We are looking to expand the living space in anticipation of more live-in staff. Come and help! Last summer a weeklong Healers' Retreat was led by Blair Voyvodic. What a thrill to have our kind of medicine being taught by someone else. So true

to our tradition—it cost nothing. In fact, we supplied beds and food.

I continue to lecture and perform all over the world. Working with Susan Parenti has broadened every presentation. We have made my first stage clown show, premiered in Australia this March. We have a new ten-part two hour show on passion and persistence. People seem to like our poetry and music show. I am so lucky to have such a strong woman's voice in our work.

Susan, our architect Dave Sellers and I spent 3 days at Arizona State University last fall, leading a symposium on health care design fantasy. We divided 25 hours equally. I focused on design for healthy individuals, Dave on healthy community and Susan on a healthy society. Six other lecturers brought in their specific work (as in music therapy) to reinforce our design. This was such a comprehensive process it captivated our audience of students, professors and architects. I salute Bob Wolf's courage in creating this event.

Stimulating Students

Many hospitals and medical

schools have invited me to spread seditious ideas of fun in service, often including clowning. (Tufts, UNC Med School, U. of MN, Brown, Case Western Reserve,

Patch and staff apprentice, DeMe, summer 1997



Johns Hopkins and many more.)

One delicious treat is the National Youth Leadership Forum for Medicine, under encouragement from the great Peggy Surcka. I spoke to groups in San Francisco and Virginia; each 350 high school students wondering if they want to be doctors. If America had places for doctors to serve their society, these students would be ready. Wake up world! Make medicine a service, not a business, and costs will plummet.

I love going to colleges. My trip to Bucknell University last spring was typical. I was there 72 hours and worked 60 of them, lecturing to everyone from groundskeepers and cooks to students and professors, a local hospital and school. I met photographer Ben Stechschulte there (son of my host, Don) who literally stayed with me the whole 72 hours, taking hundreds of photos. Since then he's done the same in West Virginia and in Russia. He took these photos of Tom and Robin. His friendship has meant a lot to me. I delight that he wants to catch our essence in photos with such thoroughness.

I keep my foot in complementary medicine going to the Osteopathic School of Medicine of New England, the Naturopathic College in Oregon and the Traditional Acupuncture School in Columbia, Maryland. I cherish visits to the large herb gatherings and want our hospital to explore herbal medicine. Last year at a very poor time for Gesundheit, the



Students at Bucknell University. Look at those legs!



Patch receives Peace Abbey Award, accompanied by Meg Randa, Gina Halpern & Lewis Randa, collection and bailed us out.

I can't begin to list every presentation. Know that each one enriched my life and expanded our outreach. Each one gave new friends. I thank each and every soul along my road these past months—you have made the whole thing sweet.

Globe Trotting

I have a broader and broader connection in the world every year. This year I go to New Zealand, Australia, England, Scotland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Poland, Holland, Cuba, Canada, Russia and Bosnia.

Last year I went to Trinidad for a week at the invitation of Dr. Harry Collimore who has done so much for the poor and needy for over 50 years. His practice in his home is a model of service. He took me to the president's house where we spoke of health care. One memorable moment was being with death row inmates in a horrible prison there. If you want to help Harry's work, let me know.

I sank my hooks ever deeper into the British Isles, becoming a Findhorn Fellow on last year's visit. My time there is so rich. I loved staying with John Talbot, a voice for the ecovillage movement. I went to the University of Nottingham for the Center of Health Sciences Management's celebration. Then down to Wales for the NHS staff college and several hospitals. I also visited Glasgow's Homeopathic ACHOO! Service 4

Hospital. Last fall I attended the Scottish Ecological Design in Healthcare Conference and this June to Edinburgh and London's St. James Picadilly. I feel I have so many friends there. When in London I make sure I sit in front of DaVinci's Madonna of the Rocks for a long time. This June, friend Jonathan supported me through life changes when I was in London.

I enjoyed a week in New Zealand and 3 weeks in Australia this winter—hosted by new friends, Patricia and Shayne, who made the trip especially easy and fun. Part of the tour was sponsored by Ian Gawler for his Mind, Immunity and Health Conference. He also set up a fundraising event for us which helped a lot.

We sparked a lot of health professionals there to meet and work towards creating their fantasy health dreams. I began a magical friendship with four year old cancer patient, Olivia McConviller. I've written weekly since the trip and invite you to send her your loving prayers. She is one of the great gifts of my clown life.

The Angels of Melbourne

An Angel in Melbourne came to several presentations and loved our work so much that she and her husband became our patrons, covering our monthly operating expenses for a period. This is such a fantastic gift. I've really had no relief from this need in 26 years. 1996 was, I feel, our worst

financial year. Four times I thought we would have to fold. I wept a lot, did a huge amount of begging just to survive. It was one big painful, humiliating experience because I know we are a worthwhile organization with great repercussions at a very cheap price and I did not want us to fold. So to angels everywhere—to everyone who ever sent funds to our crazy project, thanks. You literally hold us up.

Friends Do Fundraising

Doctor Clown friend Jan Adams had a grand Gesundheit fundraiser in Minneapolis last year that brought Bowen's Big Butt and others into play. This grassroots effort makes us live.

April Fool's Day 1996 Lisa and Tomas and a support cast held a benefit at Lisner Auditorium starring old friends, The Flying Karamazov Brothers, which raised more than \$10,000.

Children's folksinger Barry Polisar volunteered to donate to Gesundheit part of the proceeds from his tapes and CD's for children—contact him at (301) 384-9207 for a flyer of the rollicking collections available.

Highlights

I can't leave out taking Carl Hammerschlag dressed in my toilet costume to the mall to buy some shoes. There was also seeing JJ at Rockstock after 3 1/2 years with sweet contact. I felt honored in February when Lewis and Meg Randa of the Peace Abbey in Massachusetts awarded me the Courage of Conscience Award. It's a lovely stature of a dove lifting from hands. They were alerted to our work by Gesundheit supporter Gina Halpern, who also created our last fundraising letter.

Sad Family News

The saddest part of the story is that this June I separated from my wife, Linda Edquist, after 26+ years. Linda and I started this work. Her input has been undersung and critical. I can never thank her enough. Over the years we each had grown apart in our own ways.

each had grown apart in our own ways. I was no longer able to get what I need in a relationship. I think we both tried the best we could over the years to compensate for our differences. I became too fragile to continue trying. I ache for the pain it has brought to Linda and my sons. I ask that you send us all your love. I am so sorry, and apologize to Linda, Lars and Zag.

I think of so many mistakes I made in those years that I cannot erase. I will not negate our wonderful life together; we have been kind to each other and have given of ourselves. It's that I needed something different. Linda, I salute the great gifts you've been for me and for Gesundheit. Neither of us would be what we are had you not been the giant that you are.

Our Shared Quest

I always try to close these letters with thoughts on the world at large. It needs help. Maybe if we each add yet

Director Tom Shadyac talks movies with Patch; 1997



more service to our lives, maybe if we invest a whole lot more time than we do to the building of community, maybe we can move away from the standard bearing lusts of greed and power. I invite all of you to know the enrichment of giving. Take time to think of alternatives to nursing homes, of using your spare rooms for poor single

parents. Today you can choose to be friendly indiscriminately, maybe sing on a city street. Maybe you can give half your vacation time and money to helping your community. If you wonder if you are needed or important, then go out in the world to help and that feeling can go forever.

In peace,



Irreconcilable Differences

"There's nothing worth the wear of winning but laughter and the love of friends."

Hillaire Belloc

Gesundheit is about friends caring for friends. It is about healing and relationship. We are trying to build friendships that are the lifeblood of good health; friendships strong enough to sustain us when we disagree, even on the things we hold most dear.

How we support relationships through the hardest times is integral to our vision of healing community. How we handle the tough stuff—the conflict and crisis—is a measure of our wisdom and maturity. We celebrate when it works well and try to face our shortcomings with good humor and forgiveness.

We've been gathered in a true

test around Patch Adams' and Linda Edquist's conflicting needs and the ending of their long marriage. Their relationship has often been like a tree trunk, supporting the wider network of connections that is Gesundheit. They were together at the birth of Gesundheit in 1972. For those of us who love them and who came into Gesundheit through our friendship with both of them, the uprooting of their marriage has felt like a deep wrenching. Separately and as a group, we have gone through confusion and grief and self-examination. We are working to create a context of supportive caring around a very bumpy and human experience.

In these past months, we have often found ourselves stumbling along, wanting to help, not at all sure of what to do or say. At times, a belief that friends keep on keeping on has been our clearest guidepost. Sometimes our best effort is to just...show up, trusting that being there with an open heart and mind is a powerful way of caring.

We're trying to navigate a difficult, often painful passage, in a loving, cooperative, creative, even occasionally funny way. Sometimes we're making it. Sometimes we're not.

We have drawn a lot in faith on our love for each other. We have also been strengthened by understanding that caring for our common well-being is essential health care. This after all, IS the health care that brings us together in the first place.

We share this significant personal news with you because many of you are links in the web of friendship that holds us up. We trust in your support and understanding.

Blair Voyvodic & Heidi Read

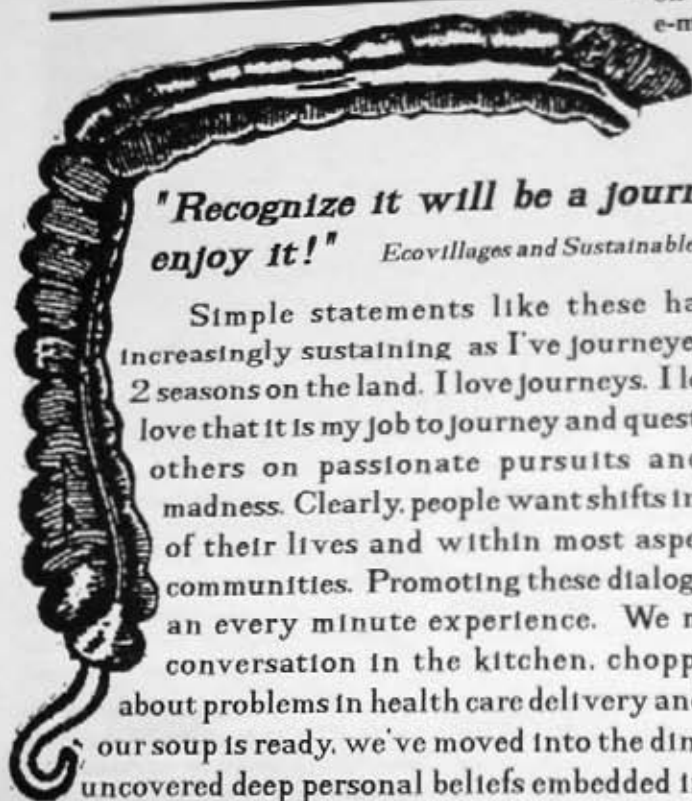
If you would like to contact Patch or Linda, their addresses are:

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6877 Washington Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22213

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"Recognize it will be a journey, and enjoy it!" *Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities*

Simple statements like these have become increasingly sustaining as I've journeyed these past 2 seasons on the land. I love journeys. I love quests. I love that it is my job to journey and quest with many others on passionate pursuits and mundane madness. Clearly, people want shifts in many areas of their lives and within most aspects of their communities. Promoting these dialogues becomes an every minute experience. We may begin a conversation in the kitchen, chopping onions, about problems in health care delivery and by the time our soup is ready, we've moved into the dining hall and uncovered deep personal beliefs embedded in each other. I would hope we could then carry on to share some of our disgusting habits and pet peeves. That's the real joy of the journey we're on with all the people we host and live with.

Around 400 volunteers put in over 3,000 days these past two years and weasled their way into our hearts and home. I wish you could all meet each other for one week-end to know why I stay involved and hopeful for this project and our next evolutions. Big bites of Joy - people bring huge mouthfuls of it our way and I know my journey is sustained by each morsel just when details of tasks upon details confuse those taste buds. Thank you passionate plAyLIENS!

Kathy

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Beach Clown and Donna Laino-Curran, 1997.



QUESTING THE INNER CLOWN

My personal journey has been a thrill. Our 1996 season began with an Artist-in-Residency with the amazing Pat Oleszko and those Spring Break Students from Illinois. We cranked out costumes and performance around the theme "Is this your Life?"

That summer, I was a nurse for 2 weeks at Wavy Gravy's Camp Winnarainbow in Northern California. Kids come to this performing arts camp with a circus focus to indulge in their play and delights. I saw their sore throats and passed out lots of vitamin C which is a charming way to be with a kid clown.

Clown quests continued as I journeyed to Russia last November for 2 weeks with Patch and 34 other messengers of delight. I had a blast bouncing around Moscow and St. Petersburg in a cape the shape of a grand piano. Heidi Read helped clothe me as I contemplated the consciousness of a piano, amidst kids in hospitals, aging performers in retirement homes and people on the street. To my greatest delight, I will now be assisting Lorrie Shamarin and company with these tours. Clown contemplation will push a whole new realm of foolish jesting - jest you wait!



Kathy Blomquist and longterm volunteer Jeremy Blaisdell, 1997.



Design process team, summer, 1997: (L-R) Leslie, Bobbe, Nicole, Kathleen, Janet, Patch, Kathy, Paul, Donna, Gaia, Kevyn, Frances.

EEK - O - VILLAGE!!

After Russia, I toured 2 more weeks in Denmark visiting 11 communities seeking the "eco" in ecovillages and serving as Gesundheit ambassador. Seeing these initiatives convinces me that we are one big collective with one big commitment to play in an unfolding design process. Using the natural order in this process will inspire us to live by the same laws - ones that are as natural to being human as being a carrot. What endeared me most to Denmark--over any specific ecological achievement or technology--was the fellow-ship I found in each community. Because Denmark is geographically tight and because the ecovillage's strongest declarations have origins there, I was able to make a grand dash thru many projects, each one unique, diverse, evolving, exciting.

Gesundheit has taken a dive into the EEK-O part of this village movement. Based on the principle that the health of the individual cannot be separated from the health of the rest of our EEKosystem, we at Gesundheit aim to engage ourselves as a holistic medical community with the Global Eco-Village Network (GEN) of projects exploring low-impact, ecologically sustainable community design. In an ecovillage, human activities are integrated with the natural world in such a way that human development may be sustained indefinitely. And in an EEKovillage, human beings will practice joy and service in ridiculously sustaining style.

To my knowledge, there are no fully functioning ecovillages on the planet. In other words, we are at the conception of definition and declaration for the modern era which is a very exciting position to teeter in. "Ecovillage and Sustainable Communities" outlines 6 main challenges facing visionaries as they work to bring ideals into practice:

- 1.) The bio-system--i.e. preserve natural habitats on the land
- 2.) The built environment--i.e. build with ecologically friendly materials
- 3.) The economic system--Are there useful alternatives to the money system?
- 4.) The governance--how will decisions be made, conflicts resolved?
- 5.) The glue--shared values and vision--what is the appropriate balance of unity and diversity?
- 6.) The whole-system--How will a right relationship to all systems be maintained in order to develop at a sustainable pace?

Knowing what is wrong with these systems is easy. The hard part is knowing what to do. Permaculture principles provide a way to unfold an ecovillage using a design system that meets basic human needs while preserving natural ecosystems. It is applicable to food, water, shelter, energy, social, and economic systems. Permaculture is a "way of organizing knowledge, a connecting system that integrates science, art, politics, anthropology, sociology, psychology

and the diverse experiences and resources available in any community." (Living Community: A Permaculture Case Study at Sol y Sombre, by Ben Haggard)

Architect Sim Van Der Ryn identifies five steps to sustainability:

- 1.) Solutions grow out of knowing where you are. Look to local resources, skills, and knowledge for design solutions. Let the place and its inhabitants determine the whole context for design.
- 2.) Trace the footprint, the ecological impacts of your actions.
- 3.) Design with nature. Look to the living world for design strategies. Actively incorporate living systems in designs.
- 4.) Participatory Design. Listen to every voice in the design process. As we engage the living world in community with others, we are reweaving in life's web.
- 5.) Make flows visible. Live with your design, find out how it works, and learn from it. The challenge is to make long-hidden natural processes both visible and viable. (Ecological Design, with Stuart Cowen.)

Challenges abound and overlap as we begin to contemplate how we will implement sustainable practices. How will we care for the land? What sort of earth friendly materials will we use in our structures? How will we handle our money and make sound financial decisions? Who will make decisions, make peace, make love to whom? How will we practice diversity and share unity? Will we model these complexities with the simplicity necessary to stimulate change that can sustain? Did we just bewitch all of the above with fun and delight? Did we



Workcampers preserve the workshop with Penafin, summer '97.

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promise to forgive ourselves and others for the first, second and three-hundredth mistake?

Designing our villages, determining and building our places, spawns creativity and joyful service. Gesundheit village-seekers had a chance to play with a weekend design chew this past August. Architect Leslie Becker facilitated a brainstorm that resulted in some very juicy conceptualizations. Basically, we determined 5 simple design criteria that would help us play with our unfolding fantasy. Spaces will collectively need to reflect the criteria: Silly, Environmental, Diverse, Welcoming, and Experimental. Much more will come out of this as we spend time with our architect, Dave Sellers updating and outlining the next phases.

Simultaneous to the structural chew, Blair Voyvodic was facilitating the Healer's Gathering and beginning a solid table of contents for the handbook, "How To Be A Gesundheit Staff Member."

Our main work here on site in

Illinois Spring Break students boogie in Pat Oleszek costumes. Whoopie!



West Virginia has been first, to look after what we have, to restore what we can, and finally to introduce new elements into well-functioning systems. Our gardens have been ongoing examples of

this. Now our workshop building can boast the same skillfull attention to main-tenance. Charlie Bladen spent one year repairing leaks, finishing trim work, painting the interior of all 3 levels, and keeping the building and grounds tidy. This year, Dennis Renkens completely washed, stripped and restained the exterior walls with a dynamite group of volunteers from Switzerland, France, Maryland and Alaska.

Our volunteers keep reminding me how differently rich we can be and still behold what is good and most kind. And although they

haven't found the strawbale walls of a hospital here yet, they are given the kind of hospitality that belongs with all the other fuzzy ideals being promoted: Be Nice, Make Friends, Welcome a Stranger.

I love this journey. I love this quest. Now go on, get to it, and pick a vivacious verb to live by.

HIGHLIGHTS 1996-1997

Staff Transitions: Hellos to Dennis Renkens, Bobbe Lee, DeMe, Gary Johnson. Farewells to Bob Kornegay, Ray Chantall, Charlie Bladen and Dennis.

Long Term Volunteers: Marie Leduc, Michal Penniman, George Johnson, Paul Best, Aaron "Drask" Chantrell, Adam White, Colleen Fleming, Cliff Steinberg, Sean Leanord, Chris Graff, Jeremy and Frances Blaisdell, Gilles Ebersold

Buildings: New wood shelves and curvy counters in house kitchen - Finished walls and shelves in root cellar - Eagle barn turned into a dorm for long term volunteers, its old decking removed and new, larger deck constructed - Completely washed, stripped, and stained the workshop - Rebuilt new solar shower adding 2 more stalls - Electrified Eagle Dorm, Yurts, Footbridges, Courtyard



Cliff Steinberg and son Isaac Fleming-Steinberg, 1997: Whoa BABY!

Land: Established a stewardship plan thru West Virginia State Forestry - Consulted with Extension services in Morgantown on constructed wetlands option for water waste - Main road leveled, graded and parking areas expanded - Rebuilt 2 new footbridges to courtyard area

Community Outreach: Assisted with flood clean-up in Marlinton and provided massage therapy - Offered one day workshop "Performance as a Tool for Social Change" - Celebrated 25 years with a Free For All weekend attended by over 100 merry revelers - Red Cross Instructor Candidate Training with Greenbrier chapter in Lewisburg, WV - Clowning at local hospitals and nursing homes including a Free Bake Sale in the parking lot of our local Walmart

Ché, Isaac, Colleen, Gail, Kirk and Peter, summer '97



Workshops/Conferences attended: Ecovillage Design Course and week long "Building with Cob" at the Ecovillage Training Center in Tennessee - the "Totally Responsible Person" in Charleston, WV - "Putting the Pieces Together Again: Service-Learning, Volunteerism and Community Service" at Snowshoe Mt. Lodge, WV - "Ecological by Design" in Lexington, VA

Grants: Mid-Atlantic Artist-in-Residency grant to host Pat Oleszko

Networking: Launched a biannual land-based Snoozeletter: G!! Tract - Established database of volunteers on the computer - Hosted 2 well-attended Healer's Gatherings - Hosted the Performance Workshop Ensemble's 2-week summer session for teens on Permaculture and other groovy conceptual tools .



CALLING ALL HEALERS!

Does working at Gesundheit sound like your idea of a good time? Do you like imagining the possibility of being a part of the Gesundheit Hospital?

We want to get to know you.

We are offering a great opportunity to meet kindred spirits, other people inspired by the joy of service in doing fun, creative, cooperative health care. Our fourth annual Healers' Gathering will be in August, 1998 on the land in West Virginia.

We're building our network of skilled, caring people from which we will be selecting the staff for the hospital. If you want to be involved, contact Blair Voyvodic, preferably by e-mail at: healing@web.net or at RR4, Killaloe, Ontario, Canada K0J 2A0.

we want YOU!

Seeking masters of carpentry, permaculture design, administration, building and grounds maintenance and kitchen management. Happy, funny, loving, cooperative, creative? Self-responsible and community-oriented?

CALL NOW!
Kathy Blomquist
(304) 653-4338



Janet (From Another Planet) Ryvlin

Four years ago I was contemplating moving to Virginia from California. My daughter was going to start high school. I was ready for a big change in my life, and one of my best friends had moved to Charlottesville. In an effort to entice me to make the move, my friend told me she had heard of a place in West Virginia where a doctor and some other people were working to create a health care facility where humor, artistic expression and holistic free health care would be practiced. Whew! I was very excited at the thought, having practiced nursing in a large medical center on the west coast where none of these elements were present. It sounded so close to a dream that had been buried inside me—I hardly dared imagine that dream might have a chance somewhere in the world.

Well, I ended up moving only 20 miles, instead of 3,000. From time to time I'd remember this Gesundheit place, and feel a quiet longing.

Then, the summer of 1996, I was working at Camp Winnarainbow, a performing arts camp in northern California where I'd been camp nurse for 6 years. Each session, we began by registering campers—a person-by-person check-over to find out about any medical problems or medications the campers might have. At this particular session I was told I'd have the help of Patch Adams, the M.D. I'd heard about 4 years earlier. What a great

coincidence! I'm going to get to check this guy out and find out about that Gesundheit place back east!

When medical director Sharon Palton introduced us, I looked up at this tall gangly guy dressed in multicolored billowy pants and shirt, a long salt and pepper pony tail, a wide curly handlebar mustache and a great big grin on his face. I felt like I was meeting my long-lost brother and friend.

We proceeded to register 130 campers in 2 1/2 hours with great efficiency and humor abounding. We spent a week together with plenty of time to talk and tell stories. Later that summer, Gezonnie Kathy Blomquist generously gave her time and energy to get the camp through a difficult 2 week session. We had some intense times working together like a trained team.

By the end of the summer, I felt I had been introduced quickly to Gesundheit. It is as close to my dream of how to work in the world and with the world as I'd ever experienced. There is a way to be present, involved, courageous, hard working and full of humor and delight that Patch and Kathy embody, even though their personal styles are very different. It's Gesundheit—deep caring about others, the world, each other—a commitment to create a world with very different values from the cultural norm surrounding us. Greed is not a part of the picture. Sacrifice is, but not self-serving martyrdom. This sacrifice actually makes you feel rich with mutually caring relationships and a common dream. Playfulness, humor, spontaneity, creative explosions—how could I not be drawn?

When Kathy planted the seed of my coming to West Virginia for the January board meeting, I thought, well, it would be a good chance to see deeper into the organization. How do these folks interact with each other? How real can I be with them? How real are they as a group? What are the power plays? I had been in different groups and organizations and seen at times that the deeper you go into the organization, the less the group vision manifests. In other words, there could be a beautiful vision, and even good work in the world, but those involved could still be treating each other badly.

As far as the board meeting—I

didn't care what the agenda was. I just wanted to feel out the reality of these folks. Let them meet me and see what the compatibility quotient was. After several amazing conversations with Blair Voyvodic, the Sofa of the Board, it was agreed I would come.

Well, this story has a happy ending, even though it's really just beginning. The board meeting was essentially a weekend of deep group process working on the mix of personal and group goals and dreams within the context of the Gesundheit vision and intention—how to go about our lives and this project through joyful, relentless service. The quality of interaction throughout the meeting was earthy, tender, playful, direct, honest, practical and visionary.



Janet From Another Planet gets some help on her yog from (clockwise from bottom): Kristi Bliss, Lisa Beaudet, Cheryl Casteen, Blair Voyvodic.

Now when people ask me what is Gesundheit, this is what I tell them. It's not just a project, a place, a vision or a cool name. It's a way of being, an approach to service, an approach to personal interaction, an intention to change the world. Joyful, relentless service. Think about it. A high priority on fun and play. Hard work. Really hard work. It's not so intimidating when humor and play and joy are mixed in.

So I fell in love—
with Gesundheit.

ACHOO! You got me!

Healthy Buildings for Healthy Environments for Healthy Communities

David Sellers

Reflecting on a dozen years of designing, sketching, thinking and dreaming over our silly hospital, I find myself balancing the sometimes overwhelming task of evolving a living, challenging, safe and creative hospital with the joy of assembling ideas, people and visions into a built-world. The mere act of sifting these variables with my cohorts brings spurts of clarity and inspiration like gushers plopping out of the sky unannounced into a mishmash of tangled closely held needs and wants. It is like watching a deer running through grass over its head. Now and then it leaps high in the air, looks around for bearings, drops back for a dash through the maze and returns for another leap and realignment, repeated until the meadow is crossed.

Creating a home for care-giving professionals charged with holding together visions through action for the purpose of opening doors to untold and unpredictable situations with individuals, families and communities seeking clarity and self-alignment in a garden of laughter cultivated with the best our

world can muster...with ecological balance, regional responsibilities and above all, fostering individual freedoms. That's all. No wonder it hasn't been done before.

And so it is happening now. The world of the designer is by definition one of functioning in chaos, preconstructing in scale a model of the future with incomplete and only partially accurate inputs of the present world. The model serves as the tool to hone, clarify and test the ideas to reshape them again and again and finally dive in. The rapidly emerging consciousness of non-toxic materials, life-cycle costing, material selection, community values, the reemerging appreciation of craftsmanship coupled with an army of craftspeople are all ingredients in the soup of the Gesundheit Hospital.

Our upcoming design workshop brings together a first phase

Dave Sellers, Kathy Blomquist, Blair Voyvodic and Jeff Innis, Vermont, 1997



proposal of a staged construction which fuses design principles such as waste treatment with the fabric of the village, recycling, using immediate materials in a sustainable fashion and so on. These guiding principles are only some of the key ingredients. Gesundheit is a living organism which will self-correct and forge new connections as it continues to grow. Building a first phase will teach the second phase and send strong messages to our expanding family as it grows.

More later.

Dave

"...I wanted you to know I have become possessed! I don't know what it is, but since I have returned from Gesundheit I have been living my life more actively than ever before. I have been working on developing my leadership curriculum. I have been practicing my harmonicas, writing letters, exercising regularly and eating healthier than I was before (which was still pretty healthy). I was NEVER a reader until this year and now I am in the middle of three different books I can't put down. I think I caught some wonderful disease at Gesundheit that has purged my body of apathy. I sure hope it is contagious.

I guess now that I am actively working on my dream, life gets real exciting real fast."

Dave Pinzino, August, 1997

Dave and Jeff Pinzino join Dennis Renkens and Patch Adams at the Trattoria Gesundheit, summer, 1997.





Gesundheit!



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